

Praying for Eye-Opening Grace and Encouragement (Ephesians 1:17-18)

Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at GCBC on January 16, 2011

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Paul prays: ¹⁷ *that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, **the Father of glory**, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.* ¹⁸ *I pray that **the eyes of your heart may be enlightened**, so that you will know what is **the hope** of His calling, what are the riches of **the glory** of His inheritance in the saints*

In v. 17-18 Paul prays that we would grasp these truths, or let them grasp us, grip us, get a hold of us, gain a foothold in our hearts. It's a prayer for illumination ("wisdom and revelation...knowledge... eyes of your heart enlightened"), God-given appreciation of these blessings, appropriation of them, and application of them.

Outline:

1. Eye-Opening Grace (v. 17-18a)
2. Encouragement (v. 18b)

#1. Eye-Opening Grace (v. 17-18a)

Before we consider what's in this prayer, we need to consider who the prayer is to. Before asking for wisdom in v. 17, the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. Paul begins reverencing, hallowing the name of our Father in heaven first (Mt. 6:9). "*Father of glory*" in v. 17 suggests *source of glory*, holiness. In v. 18b he again mentions God's "glory." In v. 12b we again see the phrase "*the praise of His glory*." The same is at the end of v. 14 "*to the praise of His glory*." Back in v. 6 when the Father's work in salvation is summarized, it says it's all "*to the praise of the glory of His grace*." God opened the eyes of the Reformers to this truth that salvation is all by God's grace (*sola gratia*) and for His glory (*solī deo gloria*), none to man.

To review what we studied last month in Ephesians 1, based on Scripture alone (*sola scriptura*) the gospel teaches salvation is by grace alone (*sola gratia*) through faith alone (*sola fide*) in Christ alone (*solo Christo*), and for God's glory alone (*solī deo gloria*). We've been studying those *solas* of the gospel that were recovered in the Reformation of the 1500s. I unashamedly stand upon those today and hope all of you stand with me in the battle for the truth in our day where those are still the key issues worth fighting for, I believe, hills worth dying on, anchors for the faith, not just for our salvation, but I believe for our philosophy of ministry and our life. The reason I've taken the time to emphasize those foundations of our faith is not for sake of mere history or a hobby horse or because I like to hear old Latin words. These are the heart of healthy faith, keeping Christ's glory central and keeping the gospel central.

Those were not just the distinctives of the Reformation/Reformed tradition in contrast to Catholicism in history, they are key truths for today's professing Christianity where based more on culture than based on conversion, for comfortable pew-sitting congregants who have no clue or care for truths their forefathers shed blood for. If you're ignorant of history and the "sola" statements, it's easier to repeat the errors of the past and stumble in the future. Let me give you a practical example (one of many) where these historical truths matter today.

Maybe this week or afternoon you'll meet a couple nice guys wearing ties who are at your doorstep with lies to convince you they're Christians, too, who also "believe in Christ." They may even say they believe salvation is by grace through faith in Christ based on Scripture and for God's glory. That's why this little word *sola/alone* becomes so crucial, whether talking to Mormons, Masons, Muslims, Mahatma-Ghandi followers-this is always the key issue whether one prays to Mecca or Mary, whether one is in the majority of Americans who profess to be 'Christians' (all above may *say they believe in Jesus*).

Demons "believe" (Jas 2:19), but ask somebody if he's repented of his sin and trusted in a salvation by grace *alone* through faith *alone* in Christ *alone*, plus nothing, minus nothing? Does he have the right Jesus and right gospel and the right Scriptures that alone saved and changed him so he lives for God's glory alone? Do you? Do you share gospel? God's highest glory = announcing good news. Can you explain the gospel to others? Do you? Will you?

To God's glory God has saved Catholics once blinded by tradition as well as Baptist boys like me once blinded. He saves us not by religion but by repentant faith in the true gospel, as it's shared by a normal person like us, when the person of the HS removes blinders spiritually, enabling to see Christ, giving sight to a spiritually blind man so he can sing Amazing Grace ("twas blind but now I see").

But that eye-opening grace or illuminating grace doesn't end at salvation. It *begins* at salvation. We need to notice that v. 17-18 is a prayer for believers: continual enlightenment, eye-opening grace. He prays in v. 17 that the Father of glory would by His Spirit give us wisdom or insight to see the truths of v. 3-14 and how they apply to our lives and that the Spirit would reveal more of God to us so we can know Him more, not intellectually, but intimately in the inner man. This is spiritual wisdom and supernatural revealing of God's glory.

The "Spirit" mentioned in v. 17 is perhaps best understood as God's Spirit rather than our spirit (capital "S" vs. lower-case). But whatever your translation, God is the source of true wisdom, not us. The word "revelation" is only used for what God does, not for something human wisdom perceives / produces. The phrase "*spirit of wisdom*" comes right out of Isaiah 11, referring to the HS. Paul says believers are *sealed* with God's Spirit (1:13) but he also says they need to be continually *filled* with the Spirit (5:18). If you look at 3:16, the same HS who seals us, he also prays to strengthen us:

¹⁶ *that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,*

We need the HS and His wisdom to dwell more fully and deeply in us, not in the sense of sealing us again, but strengthening again and again, supernaturally enabling us to apply His truth (wisdom def.), to perceive what God wants us to do and the power to carry it out. God gives wisdom as we study and apply what we already have (in the Word), with the help of HS, who we already have. God in His wisdom has made us dependent on Him for our wisdom, by prayer, for our good as we recognize it, for His glory when He answers.

This is my constant prayer request for myself: I need wisdom. Let me share some words of wisdom from men much wiser than me:¹

- Martyn Lloyd Jones: ‘the essence of wisdom is that before we begin to act at all, or attempt to please God, we should discover what it is that God has to say about the matter.’
- Packer: ‘Not until we have become humble and teachable, standing in awe of God’s holiness and sovereignty [v. 3-11] ... acknowledging our own littleness, distrusting our own thoughts, and willing to have our minds turned upside down, can divine wisdom become ours.’
- D. E. Hiebert: ‘He who has a constant longing for wisdom will persistently pray for it.’
- Tozer: ‘The wisest person in the world is the one who knows the most about God’ [the point and end of Eph 1:17]

Paul prays that we would know God more, i.e., intimately, deeply. This was Paul’s passion above all else in Philippians 3, that made all other things off life fade to nothing: “*that I may know Him!*”

J. M. Boice, one of the great evangelical expositors of 20th century:

“the greatest need of the evangelical church today is for professing Christians really to know God.” My opinion has not changed in all the years ... As I read a verse like Eph. 1:17, I sense that from the beginning this has been the prayer of true pastors for God’s people ... Paul would answer, “... I am not praying that the Ephesians might come to know more *about* God, though they probably do have a great deal more to learn, but rather than they might know *him*. Knowing him and knowing about him are quite different.”²

J. I. Packer in his book *Knowing God* says to know God includes:

- *personal dealing*: ‘It is a matter of dealing with him as he opens up to you, and being dealt with by him as he takes knowledge of you’
- *personal involvement*: ‘in mind, will and feeling ... The believer rejoices when his God is honored and vindicated, and feels ... distress when he sees God [dishonored] ... Equally, the Christian feels shame and grief when convicted of having failed his Lord ...’
- [*personal*] *grace*: It is a relationship in which the initiative throughout is with God – as it must be, since God is so completely above us and we have so completely forfeited all claim on his favour by our sins.’³

So a great way to apply v. 17 is: pray for God’s grace for God to give through His HS, illuminating insight to reveal Himself more to others you know and love, so they’ll know and love God more. And if Paul’s prayer includes people like us, we can pray for us as well as others (our Father gives generously to children who ask).

Verse 18 continues “*I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you will know ...*” (and knowing biblically is not just in the head, it has to do with the heart, v. 18a makes clear). “Heart” in the Bible includes thinking, feeling, emotion, affection. And our affections relate to our apprehension, what we perceive.

If you look at Luke 24, after Jesus was resurrected, 2 disciples saw him on the road, but didn't perceive or recognize who Jesus was. Not a problem with physical eyesight, they didn't have the insight. They also hadn't seen Jesus in their Scriptures, that were really all about Him, because as v. 25 says, they were "dull / slow of heart." In v. 27 Jesus begins with Moses and goes through the whole OT, it says He "explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. [Later, v. 31] **their eyes were opened and they recognized him** [same word epiginosko from Eph. 1:17] ³² They asked each other, "Were not **our hearts burning within us** while he talked with us on the road and **opened the Scriptures to us?**"

Paul is praying with similar language that we as followers of Jesus would also see more of Christ in Scripture, recognizing Christ as we read His Word. We need our eyes opened. We need the Lord to open the Scriptures to us so that our heart burns within us as well!

If you turn back to Psalm 19, God's Word explains how it does so. The phrase "eyes of your heart" by Paul uses 2 Grk words we may recognize: *ophthalmo-* and *cardia*. Paul in essence is praying to the Lord not only as Great Physician, but as spiritual ophthalmologist and spiritual cardiologist, to help us to see spiritually more, to revive our hearts, with the instrument of His Word, as He promised.

Psalm 19:7 *The law of the LORD is perfect, **restoring [or reviving] the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.** ⁸The precepts of the LORD are right, **rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.***

4 synonyms for God's Word: law, testimony, precepts, commands. 4 results: reviving souls, making wise the simple [i.e., mind], rejoicing hearts, enlightening eyes. Total spiritual sufficiency! Turn to Ps 119, an even bigger tribute to God's sufficient Word. All 176 verses are in some way illustrating what we just read. You can read prayers for God to revive us in His Word, make us wise in His Word, rejoice our hearts in it, open our eyes to God's Word.

Ezra 9:8 (NKJV) *And now for a little while **grace has been shown from the LORD our God ... that our God may enlighten our eyes and give us a measure of revival in our bondage.***

²⁵*My soul cleaves to the dust; **Revive me according to Your word.***
... [How does God revive us? Look back at v. 18:] ¹⁸***Open my eyes, that I may behold Wonderful things from Your law.***

There are wonderful things in God's Word that even true believers won't see unless God opens our eyes to behold them as wonderful! We need to pray that God would open our eyes to see His wonders. True believers still need to pray for heart reviving, heart inclining:

³⁶***Incline my heart to Your testimonies ...***

If you need your heart to be inclined to crave God's truth instead of coveting the things of this world, if you need to be spiritually revived from dullness, dryness, if you don't see wonderful things in God's Word as you read it at times, let me encourage you that one of the godliest men in human history who wrote this Psalm at times felt that way.

But let me also encourage you to notice how he prayed and to pray that way for your own soul and others, to not be satisfied with superficiality, plead with God to revive your heart, incline your heart, enlighten your heart and your eyes to see Him! And keep reading other parts of Psalm 119, his passionate love for God and His Word – if you want more of that, pray more like this!

HOW TO PRAY FOR THE SOUL (YOURS OR ANOTHER’S)

(from John Piper, *Taste and See: Saving the Supremacy of God in All of Life*)

Here is the way I pray for my soul. I use these prayers over and over again—for myself and my children and wife and for our pastoral staff and elders and for all my church. This is the meat and potatoes of my prayer life.

1. The first thing my soul needs is an *inclination* to God and his Word. Without that, nothing else will happen of any value in my life. I must *want* to know God and read his Word and draw near to him. Where does that “want to” come from? It comes from God. So Psalm 119:36 teaches us to pray, “*Incline my heart to Your testimonies and not to gain*”
2. Next I need to have *the eyes of my heart opened* so that when my inclination leads me to the Word, I see what is really there and not just my own ideas. Who opens the eyes of the heart? God does. So Psalm 119:18 teaches us to pray, “*Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your law*”
3. Then I need for my *heart to be enlightened* with these “wonders.” I need to perceive glory in them and not just interesting facts. Who enlightens the heart? God does. So Ephesians 1:18 teaches us to pray “*that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened*”
4. Then I am concerned that my heart is badly fragmented and that parts of it might remain in the dark while other parts are enlightened. So I *long for my heart to be united* for God. Where does that wholeness and unity come from? From God. So Psalm 86:11 teaches us to pray, “O LORD, I will walk in Your truth; *unite my heart to fear Your name*”
5. What I really want from all this engagement with the Word of God and the work of his Spirit in answer to my prayers is *that my heart will be satisfied with God* and not with the world. Where does that satisfaction come from? It comes from God. So Psalm 90:14 teaches us to pray, “*Satisfy us in the morning with Thy steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days*”
6. But I don’t want my happiness to be fragile or weak, but to be strong and durable in the face of the worst adversities. I want to be *strong in joy*, and persevering during the dark seasons. Where does that strength and durability come from? It comes from God. So Ephesians 3:16 teaches us to pray, “That [God] would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, *to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man*”
7. I do not want my strength in Christ to simply be fruitful for me, but for others. Clearly “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). So I want to *produce good deeds and works of love* for others, so that the glory of God will be seen in my life, and others will taste and see that the Lord is good. Who produces these good deeds of love? God does. So Colossians 1:10 teaches us to pray, “That [we] will *walk in a manner worthy of the Lord ... bearing fruit in every good work*”
8. Finally, lest the ultimate aim of it all be missed, I pray day after day—as a kind of banner flying over all my prayers—“Hallowed be Thy name” (M 6:9). Lord, cause your name to be known and feared and loved and cherished and admired and praised and trusted because of my life and ministry.

How we pray is vital. The way Paul prayed was vital for other, too.

In Eph. 1:3, Paul said believers have every spiritual blessing there is. But if we’re not mindful of and thankful for blessings (1:16), if we don’t live in light of these truths, if our practice doesn’t match our position in Christ, we need to pray for HS’s insight to reveal these things so we can recognize these things, revel in these things, so we will rejoice in them. We need to pray for God’s illumination, for God’s eye-opening enlightening grace, for our spiritual revival.

1:18 *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling ...*

#2. Praying for Encouragement (“the hope of His calling”)

There are 3 massive realities in v. 18-21 that eye-opening grace reveals to us: hope, riches, and power (hope is the first for today). Hope and encouragement are great needs in our day. Steve Green:

Everyday they pass me by, I can see it in their eye
Empty people filled with care, headed who knows where
On they go through private pain, living fear to fear
Laughter hides the silent cries only Jesus hears

People need the Lord and His encouragement and hope. We live in a depressed, repressed, helpless, hopeless society. In the US, millions of teenagers are given prescriptions for antidepressant drugs regularly, over a million of which are 9 years old or younger. Even more kids under age 9 refill prescriptions for antipsychotics, and even more get anti-hypertension pharmaceutical prescriptions. *Wall Street Journal* reports more than 25% of teens and younger in the U.S. take prescriptions on a regular basis to combat depression, stress, high cholesterol or blood pressure, for sleep aids, etc.⁴

If the issue is hope, do we believe the gospel has hope? For issues that are spiritual in nature, God’s Word has lasting deep spiritual solutions as it is applied. Paul prayed for the hope of Christians in Ephesus, and the way verse 18 is structured makes clear this isn’t automatic. God needs to open our eyes to His truth and the hope and encouragement in His Word and promises. Biblical hope is in Christ (v. 12). It must begin with Him. Apart from Christ is hopelessness

2:12 ... you were at that time separate from Christ ... *having no hope and without God in the world.*

But God (2:4) came for us, raised us, made us alive (v. 5-6) and His calling us from death to life from darkness to light gives hope of His calling (1:18). God worked in the most hopeless situation in our past, and is always working in all things in the present (1:11). Remember your calling, Paul says to the Corinthians, not many of you wise, mighty, strong ... God’s calling and choosing of us was intentionally of the opposite. That should give “hope of His calling” to us who are weak, lacking might, strength: hope in God!

If you turn to Rom 15, there’s a good illustration of biblical “hope” which often includes confidence, expectation, and encouragement.

Romans 15:4 *For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and **the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.***

Everything in the Scriptures (at that time the OT), was written for us, and not only for our instruction, but for our encouragement so that we might have hope. That’s one reason we don’t want to neglect the whole counsel of God, and if we’re faithful to teach it as God intended, this is part of it. You could call it a hermeneutic of hope.

End of v. 12 says of Messiah: *In Him shall Gentiles hope.*¹³ *Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

What Paul prays for the Ephesians he also prays for the Romans. The encouragement of the Scriptures should give us hope which should give us joy as the HS opens our eyes to it by His filling, His power, peace, illumination, revelation, so our hope abounds more.

Back in Romans 8, he explains further how “hope” and “calling” are related (Eph 1:18 uses specific phrase “hope of His calling”). Rom 8:24-25 talk about hope, leading to v. 30: “*these whom He predestined, He also called* [Eph 1:18]; *and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.*³¹ *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?* [that’s the great “hope of His calling” right there]

If you read Romans 3:10-23 before you read Romans 8, you’ll see the hope of His calling in even greater measure, if your eyes are open to it (“*no one who does good ... no one who seeks God*” then 8:30 makes sense why we needed to be predestined, called, etc.). If you read Rom. 5:6-8 before Rom. 8, the eyes of your heart can be enlightened to see the greatness of God’s calling us (“*while we were without strength [helpless, hopeless] ... while we were yet sinners ... while we were enemies*”). If you understand the depth of why we needed to be called and when we were called and what we were called from and what we were called to and who were called by (our beautiful Savior), that gives us great “hope” (Rom. 5:2-5).

If you understand the extent of God’s sovereignty extending to all things, including human choices and sin, you can grasp the hope of v. 28: ... *God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*

There’s the great “*hope of His calling*” Paul prays the Ephesians would have eyes to see, based on God’s sovereign purpose/grace. The bigger your view of God’s sovereignty ... the bigger your hope can be. If you have a little God in your mind, you’ll have little true hope in your heart. Superficial views of God give superficial hope and help. If your view of God’s power is limited, your encouragement will be.

But if you know a truly sovereign truly Almighty truly unlimited God can call and save and change sinners even as depraved as we were or would be apart from His effectual call, that should give us great hope that this God can save anyone or do anything! The fact God works all things together for good *to us He has called* should encourage and give “hope in His calling,” our sovereign good God.

You could study the word “calling” in NT (synonym of “election”) which is not like a wedding invitation Matthew 22. Paul’s hope in Eph. 1:18 is not merely many being invited, but that God actually called him in a saving way, that gave him hope, the special grace of God to him, not just the general call or common grace of God. If you study “call(ing)” in NT letters, it’s a sovereign summons (like the call “Lazarus come forth”), a call bringing the spiritually dead to live, spiritually blind to see, spiritual captives to be freed, hopeless helpless spiritual cripples to rise and walk new life.

But rather than give you a theological textbook definition, here's a testimony of that from the year 1902 by a missionary to the Congo in Africa:

'For fifteen years, the work had its "ups and downs" – mostly "downs" ... it was a dark hour ... In February of 1902 came that "darkest hour before the dawn" ... In June we were having "**hopes**" for we wrote – "We **hope** for a spiritual awakening but we must 'learn to labor and wait' [August 8th letter to mission society] "... The outlook is indeed **hopeful.**" [August 29th] "... To us, the present condition and outlooks is exceedingly **hopeful.** For the past 6 months ... there has been a growing interest in our meetings ..."

[How did it start? Here's letter 4 months earlier to the Mission Society]

"...Turning from this dark picture, however, there are some visible results of the work here which seem like **light amid darkness.** The life and labors of a boy called "Josefa" is an example. His name is appropriate for, as a child, he was sold into slavery and carried to foreign parts of the very land where ancient Egypt was situated ... He is a **hopeless** cripple...this "poor, broken vessel" was chosen by the "Lord of the harvest" rather than the "wise" and "mighty" of us whose "calling" was [missionary] ... Josefa as a child was carried into captivity by the Bankundo, a strange tribe and tongue. Seen by an early English missionary, he was set free from slavery [their version of the word redemption from Ephesians 1] and at that Mission heard the Good News [the calling of Ephesians 1:18, giving hope to the hopeless] and found salvation from sin.

... a hopeless and helpless cripple [from human standpoint who got worse with] Violent contracting muscles broke the diseased bones and the body was covered with boils and ulcers. He suffered excruciating pain and bent and broken, his body is beyond repair and he remains as uncomely as a leper. Yet Josefa did not "curse God and die." Through long years, no comforter was found among his own people for he was the only one who knew and trusted God. The medical missionary ministered to him; the Unseen Comforter was there. [Unlike many a fellow Congo brother with lesser ailments who this missionary doctor said] dies easily ... lies down **without hope** and soon falls into the sleep of death! With Josefa ... he had some object in living ... his faith remained firm, **his hopes bright**

... [unable to make it to the missionary meetings, he heard others at night] around the campfires, they rehearsed the events of the day and Josefa, the stay-at-home, would hear an accurate account of all the white missionary had said and done. He never went to church or school in those days although he could hear the singing at the services. But he came to have the reputation of knowing well "the Words of God". He held a meeting every night even though but one or two might come. There in that grove in darkest Africa was held a primitive prayer meeting. There indeed many members of the Church today [in Congo] sang that first Lunkundo hymn, "Yesu andango" – "Jesus Loves Me" [red and yellow black and white, cripples/orphans precious in His sight]...

... In the early days of our work, Josefa was overlooked – and no wonder! He was an invalid, unable to move or be moved. Moreover his tongue was partly paralyzed and his vocabulary was a mixture of three dialects. He stammered an almost unintelligible speech ... Not without pain, he was carried in a deck-chair by four ...[to] meetings ... he would say but a few words but his presence in the "pulpit" was essential. The house was packed night after night, and the interest became intense.

The beginning of 1902 saw a spiritual awakening up and down the Congo. Locally, it came at a time when least expected, five of the seven missionaries had gone home for health...many [of the Congo natives] were asking “What must we do to be saved” and some had “brought forth fruits worthy of repentance” ... [back to August 9th letter] As many as 23 have asked to be taught the WAY more perfectly [desiring] baptism. These are men and women who have listened to our message from the first [sounds like Ephesians 1:13]. For many “moons” they have professed to love God and have desired to serve Him. There is evidence that they are earnest and sincere. These inquirers meet regularly every day [not every SUNDAY, every DAY]. The outlook is indeed **hopeful.**”

[Letter 3 weeks later] “... Our little chapel which seats perhaps 200 is always filled to overflowing. For some months we have had to have a meeting in the morning and again at night.”

[The missionary’s annual report called this year] “a great awakening ... One day a large crowd came from another town seeking “Baoi ba Nzakomba” – the “Words of God”. After that, a hundred or more in number... attended all our meetings. Bolenge itself awakened at the same time. Meetings were held twice a day and the meeting house was packed. The interest was intense...”

...Another...spectacular scene, was when the delegation of a hundred or more appeared suddenly from the interior [of Congo]. When this long line of savages darkened the palm walk leading to our bungalow, it was like a black thunderbolt out of a clear sky. There had been no intimation of such a movement ... The leader, an eloquent and earnest man, stated their purpose as they all stood attentively before our veranda. They were deeply concerned about their “baoi babe” (“bad words” – which might be called their conception of sin) and had come as a delegation to get the “Baoi ba Nzakomba” (Words of God) in their “botema” (“stomachs”, their seat of feeling and intellect). “Where was our [church]”? – And we led the way to the church. They were certainly earnest inquirers. Our village folk were impressed by it and stirred up. They were ashamed to “sit down” and not heed “the wonderful words of life.”

[As they got saved, their version of tithing was each believer gave 10% of earnings so that every 10th believer could be supported and] set aside as evangelists, to tell the Good News, so there was one preacher from the first ten and ten out of the first hundred and so on, supported by the remaining number.

So the saying was fulfilled in Darkest Africa, “The people which sat in darkness saw a great light”. The day came for the first baptisms. We went down to the beach and before a large crowd on the bank–Josefa, in his hammock, among them [and the missionary got to baptize the man] who would have become the next Witch-doctor ... [God started all this with a hopeless helpless cripple named Josefa who became] ... loved and respected by all. The Christians see in him their father in the Faith. He [went] in his hammock even to villages beyond the swamps to preach the Good News ... He lived to see hundreds, even thousands, turn from darkness to light. He died February 8, 1907, but his “works live after him.”

That’s from the memoirs of Edwin Layton, my great-grandfather, pioneer missionary to Congo, and his chapter begins with the words of God’s calling which brought him hope and should to us, quoting the Apostle Paul: “*For behold your calling, brethren, how not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called ... but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong ... that no flesh should glory before God.*”⁵

¹ These quotes from John Blanchard, *The Complete Gathered Gold*, p. 674-75.

² James M. Boice, *Ephesians*, 35.

³ James I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, InterVarsity, 1973), p. 34-36.

⁴ *The Wall Street Journal*, "So Young and So Many Pills," 12-28-2010, sec. D1.

⁵ From the unpublished memoirs and letters of Edwin A. Layton. Another missionary who tells the story is Mrs. Royal J. Dye, in *Bolenge: A Story of Gospel Triumphs on the Congo* (2nd Edition, Foreign Christian Missionary Society, 1910).

[CLICK HERE](#) for the applicable excerpts of that account of this amazing story